

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAB-01 TRSE-00 IO-10 AID-05 MC-02

ACDA-05 OMB-01 EB-07 IGA-01 /101 W

----- 022929

R 221430Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6020

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMTM DHAHRAN

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1995

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, YE, SA, UR

SUBJECT: YEMENI MILITARY LEADER ON RELATIONS WITH SAUDIS AND
SOVIETS

REF: SANA 1647

1. SUMMARY: DURING JULY 21 CALL, DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-
CHIEF AND CHIEF OF STAFF AHMAD AL-GHASHMI INFORMED ME
OF HIS PLANS TO TRAVEL TO RIYADH IN MID-AUGUST TO DISCUSS
WITH THE SAUDIS THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR THE
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YEMENI ARMY. COMPLAINING AS HE HAS IN THE PAST ABOUT

THE SLOW SAUDI RESPONSE, GHASHMI EMPHASIZED THAT YEMEN WISHES TO BE RID OF THE SOVIETS BUT CANNOT DO SO UNTIL IT HAS A FIRM COMMITMENT FROM THE SAUDIS. IN THIS REGARD GHASHMI INFORMED ME THAT THE YEMENI ARMY HAS ALREADY TURNED DOWN A SOVIET OFFER FOR MIG TRAINING SLOTS BUT HEAVY SOVIET PRESSURE ON HAMDI CONTINUES. I BRIEFED GHASHMI ON AMBASSADOR AKINS' RECENT MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN AND ALSO INFORMED HIM OF THE MID-AUGUST ARRIVAL OF THE 30 JEEPS. GHASHMI EMPHASIZED HIS WISH FOR CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND YEMENI ARMY BUT REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT OF HIS DOD-SPONSORED TRIP TO THE US TO OCTOBER BECAUSE OF HIS MID-AUGUST RIYADH COMMITMENT. GHASHMI WAS FRIENDLY AS ATTAYS BUT COMMENTS ABOUT THE SLOW DELIVERY OF THE JEEPS CLEARLY INDICATE THAT REASONABLY PROMPT DELIVERY OF US EQUIPMENT IN THE FUTURE WILL BE IMPORTANT. MEANWHILE I STRONGLY URGE GHASHMI'S US TRIP BE RESCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JULY 21, I PAID CALL ON DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND CHIEF OF STAFF AHMAD AL-GHASHMI IN HIS OFFICE TO INTRODUCE NEW DCM RANSOM AND TO OBTAIN AN UP-TO-DATE REPORT ON CURRENT MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS.

3. GHASHMI CONFIRMED THAT HE NOW PLANS TO TRAVEL TO RIYADH AFTER PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-GHANI'S VISIT TO THAT CITY WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 3. ALTHOUGH READY TO GO IMMEDIATELY, HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT HAMDI BELIEVES IT BETTER FOR HIM TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT BEFORE EMBARKING ON HIS OWN. GHASHMI SAID HE THOUGHT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD STAY FOR A WEEK AND HE EXPECTED TO PROCEED SHORTLY THEREAFTER AROUND MID-AUGUST.

4. AS HE HAS SO OFTEN IN THE PAST, GHASHMI COMPLAINED ABOUT THE SLOWNESS OF THE SAUDI RESPONSE TO YEMEN'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE, POINTING OUT THAT SOVIETS CONTINUE TO PUT HEAVY PRESSURES ON PRESIDENT HAMDI TO ACCEPT THEIR OFFER OF MILITARY AID. GHASHMI ASSURED ME THAT YEMEN HAS NO DESIRE TO ACCEPT THIS OFFER BUT THE SAUDIS MUST APPRECIATE THE NECESSITY TO MOVE QUICKLY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE PRESIDENT HAMDI WITH TANGIBLE PROOF OF THEIR SUPPORT. GHASHMI SAID THAT THE SOVIET ADVISORS WITH THE YEMEN ARMY ARE OPENLY GOING AROUND CONFIDENTIAL

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TO THEIR YEMENI COUNTERPARTS AND POINTING OUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SOVIET READINESS TO HELP THE YEMEN ARMY AS COMPARED WITH EMPTY SAUDI PROMISES THUS FAR. GHASHMI SAID THIS SOVIET APPROACH IS HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE YEMENI OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR ALMOST 2 YEARS TO SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF SAUDI PROMISES.

5. GHASHMI CONTINUED THAT HE CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE SAUDIS ARE TAKING SO LONG BECAUSE THEY MUST REALIZE THAT A STRONG YEMEN IS THE BEST PROTECTION FOR SAUDI ARABIA AGAINST SUBVERSION AND RADICALIZATION FROM ADEN. SOMEWHAT WRYLY GHASHMI SAID THAT THE SAUDIS SEEM TO MOVE LIKE EUROPEANS WHO HAVE ICE IN THEIR BLOOD EVEN THOUGH THEY LIVE IN A HOT COUNTRY LOCATED IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. TO UNDERSCORE HIS POINT, GHASHMI RECITED A YEMENI STORY ABOUT A BULL WHOSE OWNER LEFT HIM TO GO ON A TRIP AND FORGOT THAT THE BULL'S FODDER WAS ON THE ROOF OF THE FARM HOUSE. AFTER A LONG TIME HE RETURNED AND FOUND THE BULL DYING OF STARVATION. THE OWNER IN HIS STUPIDITY COULD ONLY ASK THE BULL, "WHY DIDN'T YOU GET THE FODDER, IT WAS ONLY UP ON THE ROOF"? GHASHMI SAID THAT THE SAUSIS HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT "AMERICAN" FODDER FOR A LONG TIME BUT THE YEMENI BULL IS NOT PREPARED TO DIE BECAUSE OF THE SHORTSIGHTEDNESS OF THE SAUDIS.

6. GHASHMI REITERATED YEMEN'S INTENTION TO BE RID OF THE SOVIETS ONCE HE AND PRESIDENT HAMDI ARE ASSURED OF A SAUDI COMMITMENT TO SUPPLY THE YEMEN ARMY WITH AMERICAN AND WESTERN EQUIPMENT. IN THIS REGARD GHASHMI SAID THAT THE YEMEN ARMY HAS ALREADY TURNED DOWN A SOVIET OFFER OF 70 TRAINING SLOTS IN THE SOVIET UNION FOR YEMENI OFFICERS FOR THIS YEAR. GHASHMI CONTINUED THAT THOSE YEMENIS STILL IN THE SOVIET UNION WILL BE PERMITTED TO FINISH THEIR STUDIES BUT NO OTHERS WILL BE SENT.

7. AS IN OUR LAST MEETING (SANA 1647) GHASHMI VERY PROUDLY SHOWED ME ANOTHER EGYPTIAN NEWS STORY (AKHBAR AL-YOM OF JULY 19; SEE SEPTTEL FOR COMPLETE TEXT.) IN WHICH HIS RECENT INTERVIEW WITH THE SOVIET GENERAL IN CHARGE
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OF THE SOVIET ADVISORS WAS GIVEN IN GREAT DETAIL. IN THE STORY GHASHMI REITERATED YEMENI DISSATISFACTION WITH THE SOVIETS AND YEMENI INTENTION TO LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

8. I BRIEFED GHASHMI ON AMBASSADOR AKINS' RECENT MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE USG IS PREPARED TO MOVE QUICKLY ON THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM ONCE THE SAUDIS GIVE US THE GREEN LIGHT. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT THE THIRTY JEEPS ARE NOW FINALLY ON THEIR WAY AND WOULD PROBABLY ARRIVE IN MID-AUGUST, ALONG WITH A SMALL US TEAM OF EXPERTS. GHASHMI WAS PLEASED, ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT RESIST NOTING THAT THE DELIVERY DELAY HAS LEFT A POOR IMPRESSION ON THE MINDS OF MANY IN THE YEMENI MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. GHASHMI WENT ON TO EMPHASIZE HIS HOPES FOR CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND YEMEN

AND PARTICULARLY BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. IN THIS CONNECTION HE ASKED ME TO POSTPONE HIS DOD-SPONSORED TRIP TO THE US NOW SCHEDULED FOR MID-AUGUST, NOTING THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY BE IN SAUDI ARABIA AT THAT TIME. HE STRESSED HIS DESIRE TO VISIT THE US AND SUGGESTED THAT OCTOBER WOULD BE A MORE CONVENIENT MONTH FOR HIM AND HIS COLLEAGUES.

8. COMMENT: AS ALWAYS GHASHMI WAS RELAXED, OPEN AND FRIENDLY. THE ONLY SOUR NOTE, IF ONE COULD CALL IT THAT, WAS STRUCK WHEN WE DISCUSSED THE DELIVERY OF THE JEEPS. DESPITE GHASHMI'S JOCUAR REFERENCE TO THE "HARD TIME" HE HAS GIVEN THE EMBASSY ABOUT THIS MATTER, IT WAS NONETHELESS CLEAR THAT THE LONG DELAY IN DELIVERY HAS NOT ENHANCED OUR IMAGE WITH THE YEMENI MILITARY. IN THIS REGARD I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT AS WE APPROACH THE PROBABLE BEGINNING OF A JOINT US/SAUDI MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR THE YEMEN ARMY, WE WILL KEEP IN MIND THE NEED TO ADHERE AS MUCH AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO OUR DELIVERY SCHEDULES. I REALIZE OF COURSE, THE DIFFICULTIES THIS WILL ENTAIL BUT I FORESEE PROBLEMS IF OUR DELIVERY TIMES ARE STRETCHED TOO FAR BEYOND A REASONABLE PERIOD. MEANWHILE, I STRONGLY URGE THAT GHASHMI'S TRIP TO THE US BE RESCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER BECAUSE HE PATENTLY WANTS TO GO AND CANNOT DO SO IN AUGUST FOR REASONS BEYOND HIS CONTROL. FINALLY, IT WAS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT GHASHMI HAS GREAT EXPECTATIONS FROM HIS TRIP TO RIYADH AND WELL HE SHOULD, GIVEN THE FACT THAT HE HAS STUCK HIS NECK OUT SO BOLDLY

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IN HIS DEALINGS WITH THE SOVIETS.
SCOTES

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